

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

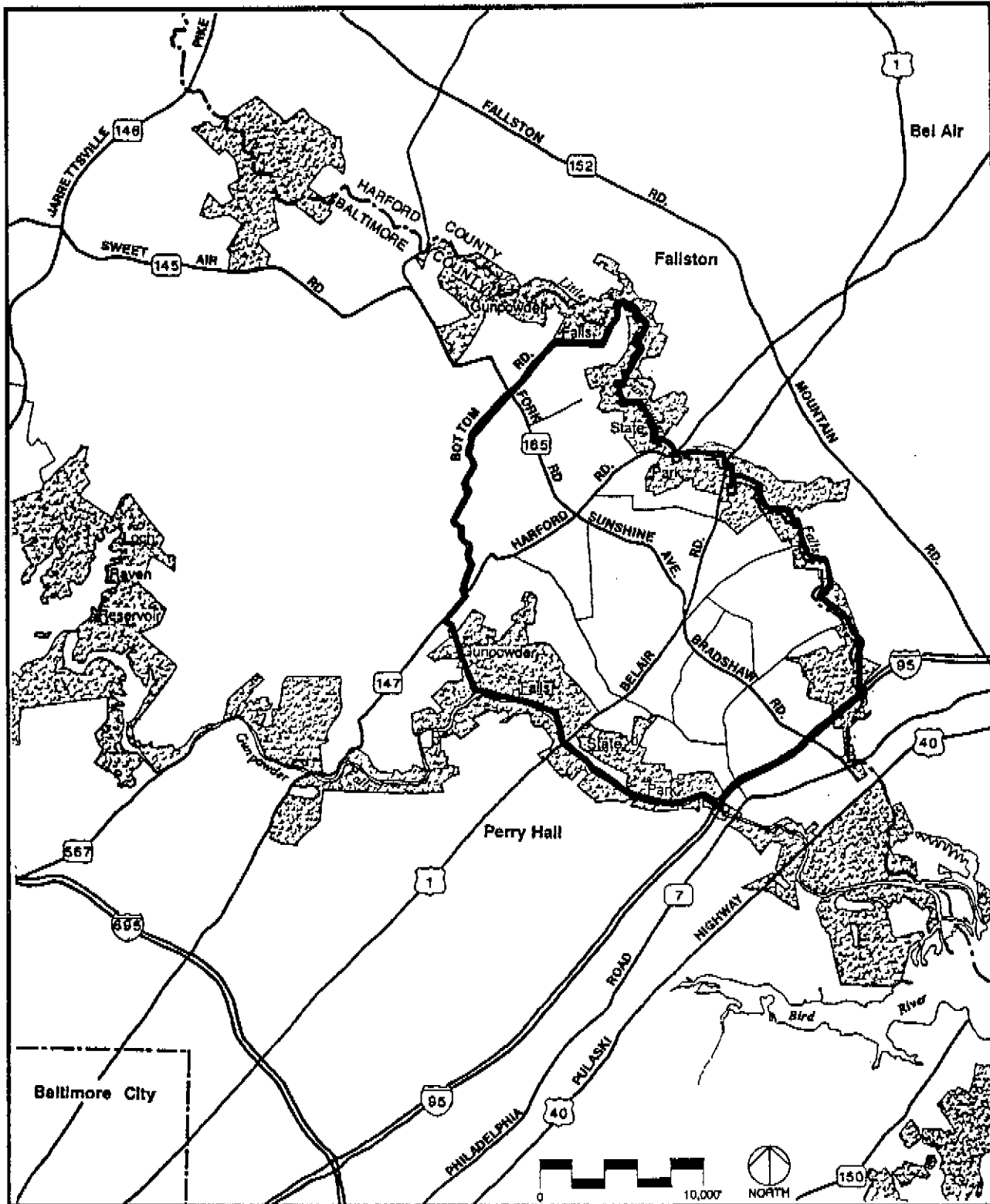
The Greater Kingsville area is dependent upon private wells and septic systems, and its way of life is built around its forests and streams. These varying systems must all work in harmony, yet the fragility of each of the systems often bring them into conflict with development in the Community.



Baltimore County has strict standards for septic systems. Unfortunately, these standards are comparatively recent. When much of the construction in the area occurred, much less stringent regulation was in place. Consequently, in the center of Kingsville as well as in other areas of the Community there may be septic systems failing into groundwater and local streams. These problems could worsen, for the land is not always available on individual lots to accommodate replacement systems. Baltimore County should take an active role in seeking possible solutions to address any failing systems with the active participation of local residents.

Soil conditions currently are the major factor in the location of development. The soils maps indicate that much of Kingsville has a clay-based soil structure, which is not conducive to adequate percolation. Percolation improves markedly going from East to West, and the maximum yield for development usually will be found only toward the Harford Road area. This land also has been designated as being the most productive for agriculture.

Well capacity and recharge are major Community concerns. Studies by the Department of Environmental Protection and Resource Management have indicated that generally there are sufficient water supplies in the Community. Because of the characteristics of well recharging, most new residential communities withdraw less water from underground storage area than is replenished by rainfall. As long as undue stress, such as the filling of swimming pools and heavy water use during drought, does not occur, current development regulations requiring deep wells, low impervious area for adequate drainage, and larger lots should protect against well failure. Golf courses and farm irrigation can place the most strain on well systems.



Study Area Location
Greater Kingsville Area

Map 2

Well failure also occurs most often in the older areas of the Community, where hand-dug wells and shallow wells are still prevalent. The dwellings and businesses typically are close together, and there is a higher ratio of impervious area than in newly developed areas. These factors, combined with rock and soil structure, create many of the well problems in the area. Baltimore County's well yield law on the resale of houses impacts most on these older homes.

The local schools are probably the heaviest users of water in the area. The St. Stephen school has had numerous well replacements, and Kingsville Elementary has had water storage facilities installed. Geology studies indicate that the Harford Road area and the land west of it have the most promising rock formations for large quantities of water and recharge capacity.

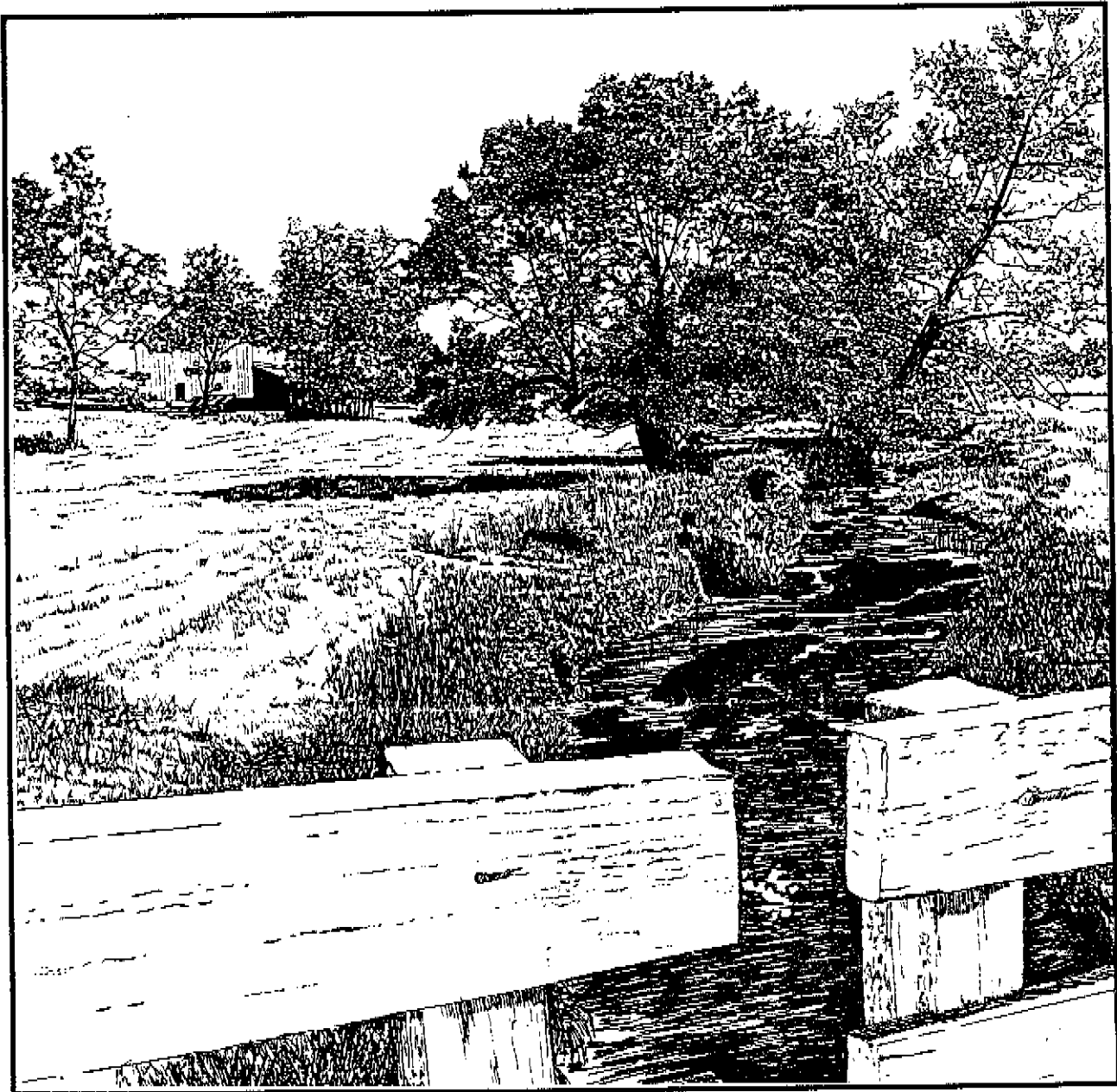
Because the community is totally dependent upon well water, the large number of underground fuel oil and gasoline tanks is a matter of concern. The County Department of Environmental Protection and Resource Management has identified the leakage from underground storage tanks as the number one environmental problem of the next decade. Many of the rural homes and businesses are served by fuel oil. The presence of many underground fuel tanks in the area creates the possibility of tank failure and of contamination of the soil and ground water. Both central Kingsville and Fork have problems with ground water contamination from leaking gasoline tanks at old, now closed, service stations. Identification of existing tanks by fuel companies, and private, residential reporting is necessary as well as education of the general public of the hazards of leaking, privately owned tanks.

The local network of streams and wetland areas is vital to the Community. There are numerous tributaries to the Gunpowder River throughout the Plan Area. The stream valleys and adjacent areas provide habitat and connecting trails between the Park systems for a varied wildlife. Today, buffer areas protect streams and wetlands from encroachment, but such buffers did not exist when much of the Community was built. Central Kingsville is built around a stream and floodplain. There are no buffers. A few homes in the Community still draw their water from springs. Farm animals generally have open access to streams and ponds, which causes erosion, siltation, and higher water temperatures. This access also creates problems for aquatic life necessary to the maintenance of water quality. In addition, the widespread use of chemicals in the treatment of lawns and farm crops also has caused problems in local streams.

Enforcement of buffer regulations on new construction only addresses a small portion of the problem. The quantity and quality of storm water runoff from uncontrolled and unmanaged agricultural use also contribute to the problem. Existing farms should be encouraged, if not required over time, to join soil conservation programs, and incentives for joining these programs should be given.

An educational program of the benefits of buffer areas in protecting water quality and in providing habitat for wildlife should involve both the residential and agricultural communities.

The Greening of Kingsville Committee should address the needs of the Community in this area. Stewardship programs from the Resource Conservation Service of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and other incentive programs for the planting of buffers should be presented the Community to emphasize the need and the advantages of suitable buffers.



"The local network of streams and wetlands are vital to the Community."

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT BALTIMORE COUNTY UNDERTAKE A STUDY TO DETERMINE THE SCOPE AND NATURE OF FAILING SEPTIC SYSTEMS AND RECOMMEND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS.

Both residential and commercial septic systems may be failing into streams and ground water in the center of Kingsville, along Mount Vista Road south of Belair Road, and in Franklinville. The solutions to particular situations may vary depending on the nature and scope of the problems detected, but doing nothing presents a losing situation for all concerned.

2. THAT BALTIMORE COUNTY INSTITUTE A PROGRAM REQUIRING NOTIFICATION AND IDENTIFICATION OF THE EXISTENCE OF UNDERGROUND FUEL STORAGE TANKS AND REGULAR, PERIODIC TESTING OF TANKS IN RURAL AREAS.

The County should require reporting of underground fuel tanks from all fuel suppliers in the County. A notification also should be sent to all homeowners in the County through the tax bills seeking notification of underground tanks. The County should require periodic testing of underground tanks to identify hazardous conditions, particularly in the rural, well-dependent areas. The County might be able to recommend a range of solutions to any discovered problems. Cooperative efforts between local government and property owners may be needed to avoid undue hardship connected with replacement or repair.

3. THAT FARMERS FILE SOIL CONSERVATION PLANS.

The County now requires farmers in the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area to file soil conservation plans. Such a requirement now should be considered for all farmers in Baltimore County. Incentives should be given farmers in local tax credits to implement the program.

4. THAT INFORMATION BE PROVIDED THE COMMUNITY ABOUT THE BENEFITS OF BUFFER SYSTEMS TO THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE INCENTIVE PROGRAMS NOW AVAILABLE FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT.

Numerous incentive programs now exist offering skilled assistance by State foresters and seedlings and trees for planting. A local stewardship committee, the Greening of Kingsville

Committee, should take the lead in disseminating information about the programs to the Community, formulating a Community plan, and coordinating its implementation.